

Community Perspectives on the future of the Portland Harbor and Willamette River

The report was funded by the Portland Harbor Partnership. This report on community perspectives is the newest of several reports. It has a publication date of May. [Regional staff have reviewed the report and attended the May 30th PH Partnership public forum where the report and survey results were discussed.](#) ~~As of 7/23/2012, regional staff had not yet discussed/reviewed this report (it appears that the report was posted recently).~~ Regional staff have said that they plan to have a meeting on 7/24/2012 to [review briefing points on the document prior to forwarding to OSWER.](#) ~~discuss this report for the first time.~~

Overall observations:

The survey instrument no longer appears to be posted on the Partnership site and it is unclear how many assumptions were made as participant results were aggregated. Moreover, the raw information that provided the basis for the reports does not appear to be available. For these reasons, it seems different reviewers might interpret survey results and get different answers. While the survey results generally appear to be reasonable, it would be difficult for EPA to defend decisions based on this information because of the lack of documentation and uncertainties in the collection and management of the data.

Conclusions/Next Steps

The final section of the report addresses next steps and notes that if there is a second phase, it will be more focused on the cleanup process. It further noted respondents suggested the Portland Harbor Partnership host an in-depth discussion of the tradeoffs between cleanup options. The report suggests a neutral third-party, such as Portland State University or Oregon State University be used to organize and run the next phase of the community dialogue on cleanup options.

The responsible parties appear to be providing a significant contribution towards the efforts of the partnership, [\(all members of the PHP are PRPs. Although stated, that point may not be clear in the report\)](#) and they clearly have an interest in the remedy selected. Any public in-depth discussion of the tradeoffs between cleanup options would have to be carefully thought out and planned in order to obtain a neutral and unbiased product.

Report Highlights (taken from report)

The community perspectives report was prepared by Portland State University and it was based upon the results of a survey. The survey included 1,870 responses and 72 focus group participants. The report highlights four primary themes from the community:

- Concern for river contamination coupled with an appeal to clean the Willamett River quickly;
- A request for more community parks and other forms of public access (e.g., fishing and boating docks, trails for hiking and biking and community centers);
- Restoration and preservation of wildlife and the natural environment; and
- Responsible development.

The survey included information on ethnicity and priorities for use of the Portland Harbor/Willamette River. The following questions and answers were provided:

1. Why is the Willamette River Important?

Responses to this question included recreation, the importance of the area as a cultural landmark of the region, wildlife habitat and symbol of abundant nature, and the importance of the area as a vital economic resource. Both recreational and subsistence fishing were captured in the report.

2. What improvements, new developments, or enhancements would you like to see in or along the Willamette River over the next 10-20 years?

Responses concentrated on five themes: recreational improvements and increased access; a clean, safe and healthy river; restoration and preservation of the natural environment; responsible utilization of the river's economic value; and enhanced public benefit.

3. Thinking about the Portland Harbor area specifically—what is important over the next 10-20 years?

Responses included: the cleanup effort; a balanced approach; economic value; restoration and preservation of the natural environment; and improved recreational access.

4. As work on the Portland Harbor Superfund site continues, how best can we involve you? How would you like to stay informed?

Responses highlighted two areas: access to information and access to direct service opportunities (e.g., sharing information, volunteer opportunities and employment opportunities).